

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SAB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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P R 141332Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7959

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5332

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA TWO)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR IS JO EG

SUBJ: ISRAELI ACTION AT IBRAHIMI MOSQUE

REF: A) JERUSALEM 1267 B) CAIRO 7885 C) AMMAN 5372

1. MOST ISRAELIS AGREE THAT IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT SENSITIVE ISSUE OF USAGE OF IBRAHIMI MOSQUE SHOULD ARISE AT ALL, AND EVEN MORE REGRETTABLE THAT A CHANGE IN STATUS QUO FORCED BY RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS SHOULD OCCUR DURING SENSITIVE PERIOD OF MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE FOUND MOST USEFUL JERUSALEM'S REPORT (REF A) ON ISRAELI ACTION TO DEAL WITH SITUATION. IN RESPONSE TO EMBASSY QUERY, MFA OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR LIAISON WITH MILITARY ADMINISTRATION (ARIEL) CONFIRMED NEW ARRANGEMENTS AND TOLD US GOVERNMENT BELIEVED IT HAD TAKEN ONLY EQUITABLE AND SENSIBLE ACTION POSSIBLE IN CIRCUMSTANCES;
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EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO COOL SITUATION DOWN AND KEEP

TROUBLEMAKERS--EITHER JEWISH OR MOSLEN ONES--FROM FURTHER EXACERBATING IT.

2. COMMENT: DEFMIN PERES MAY HAVE BELIEVED THAT HIS COMPROMISE ON USAGES OF THE MOSQUE WAS BEST AVAILABLE IN CIRCUMSTANCES. JUDGMENT HERE IS THAT THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN VIOLENCE IF GOVERNMENT HAD ATTEMPTED TO ENFORCE STRICT RETURN TO STATUS QUO WHEN FEELINGS OF JEWISH EXTREMISTS WERE RUNNING HIGH; AND THERE WERE ALSO WIDER POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS THAT HAD TO BE CONSIDERED, AT THIS TIME, EG, THE GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONS WITH THE NRP. NEVERTHELESS, FACT THAT GOVERNMENT MADE CONCESSIONS TO EXTREMISTS UNDER PRESSURE HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC AND PRESS CRITICISM, IT IS POINTED OUT, WITH REASON, THAT KIRYAT ARBA APPETITES FOR FURTHER CHANGES ARE SURE TO HAVE BEEN WHETTED.

3. THOUGH IT MAY BE COLD COMFORT, WE ALSO THINK THAT IN CONSIDERING ISRAELI ACTION IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT NOTHING HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM THE MOSLEMS BY ANNOUNCED CHANGES; WHAT IS NEW IS ADDITIONAL TIME GIVEN TO JEWS TO WORSHIP. ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OF HEBRON RELIGIOUS SITES INEVITABLY HAS BEEN AND WILL REMAIN AN EMOTIONAL ISSUE AND A SOURCE OF POTENTIAL FRICTION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ARABS AND JEWS. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE GOI HAS OBTAINED A SLIGHT SURCEASE FROM THE CLAMORS OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS AT THE EXPENSE OF FURTHER EMBITTERMENT IN THE MOSLEM WORLD.
TOON

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